



THE COLOURS OF
GIUSEPPE
GUARNERI
DEL GESÙ

OLEG KASKIV
plays the Caspar Hauser
from c1724



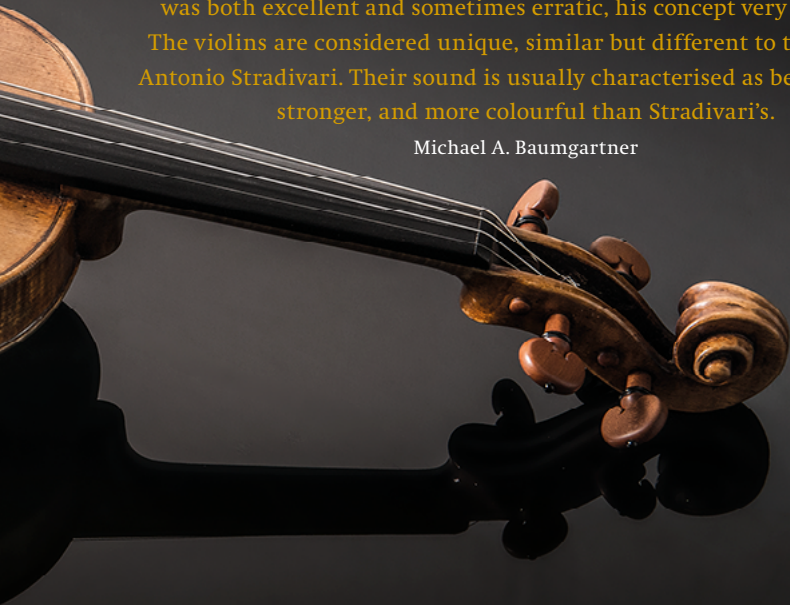
An early violin by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, the Caspar Hauser of c1724

GIUSEPPE GUARNERI DEL GESÙ (1698–1744)

Bartolomeo Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù was the most illustrious of the Guarneri violin-making dynasty, and the one who gave the family its reputation. He worked in Cremona, side-by-side with Antonio Stradivari.

Even today, there is an air of mystery surrounding both his person and his violin-making as told in many intricate stories. His craftsmanship was both excellent and sometimes erratic, his concept very personal. The violins are considered unique, similar but different to the ones by Antonio Stradivari. Their sound is usually characterised as being deeper, stronger, and more colourful than Stradivari's.

Michael A. Baumgartner



"My enthusiasm flows towards the heritage of the phenomenal Cremonese violins. After displaying the wonderful golden period violin of 1718 by Antonio Stradivari ex Deszö Szigeti/ex Benno Walter (private edition by the author), it is my pleasure to present an early violin by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù, the Caspar Hauser of c1724. The six solo sonatas by Eugène Ysaÿe present a wonderful platform for this powerful instrument and, especially, also for the great violinist Oleg Kaskiv, professor at the International Menuhin Music Academy. Combined with a dedicated and expert mastery of recording, this CD presents an excellent mix for any audiophile who is interested in the beauty of the great Cremonese violins." / **Walter Fischli**





THE INSTRUMENT: THE CASPAR HAUSER

Recently the violin described herein, which is one of the few remaining unnamed violins by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù of Cremona, was given the enigmatic name Caspar Hauser. This choice reflects the instrument's mysterious early life, making reference to the eponymous German youth who appeared in 1828 in Nuremberg as a poor young man who claimed to belong to a noble family and to have grown up in total isolation in a darkened cell. Recognition of an appropriate link with the instrument came about through a conversation between the luthier, expert Michael Baumgartner, and the new owner, a private violin player. In addition, the name also reflects the owner's own grandfather who carried the same name. / Very little is known about the history of this extraordinary violin from del Gesù's early work. It has been kept in a private collection in Germany for more than eighty years and was only rarely used. In 2002, Charles Beare acquired a share in the violin and restored it to the highest standard. The violin exhibits a typical 'del Gesù' waist characteristic of the period – pronounced and small. The f-holes resemble the shapes of Stradivari but are executed more roughly; the scroll is large and boldly cut. The varnish is stunning; brilliantly glowing and of a light orange-brown colour on a lighter ground. The sound delivers both colour and power, as can be appreciated in the present recording. This is a hallmark of Giuseppe del Gesù's instruments.

Walter Fischli

THE CASPAR HAUSER: A VIOLIN EXPERTS' DISPUTE

The Caspar Hauser, although certified by the eminent expert Charles Beare in 2007 (1) as belonging to the period 1728–30, figures in my own index of instruments by Giuseppe Guarnerius del Gesù as number B-15 in the section c1722–1726, next to its closely related sisters, the ex Debruille, Warren-Green; the ex Strong Wilkinson; and the c1724 ex Kartman, among several others. My classification to a somewhat earlier period as suggested is mainly supported by a rare violin, the ex Kubelik, ex Vecsey, still bearing its original label *Nepos Andreae*, dated 1728, which was sold a short time ago by Peter Biddulph. The Caspar Hauser, we both agreed when looking at it, was made one, if not two steps before this type. / There are several historical records of Guarneri instruments with this type of signature. However, it appears that most of these labels were removed, probably due to later suspicions that they were fake. The term *Nepos* has generally been misinterpreted as ‘nephew’ in Italian and Latin. In fact, it also means ‘grandson’, so the label would be a reference to Giuseppe del Gesù’s grandfather Andrea Guarneri, just as *Joseph Guarneri filius d’Andrea* refers to his father. Indeed, I know of four or five other violins still being thus labelled in the earlier part of the 20th century. / Giuseppe Guarnerius del Gesù married Catharina Roda/Rota (2) (who apparently was of Austrian origin) in San Pantaleone, Cremona, in October 1722 and moved out of his parents’ home. There are records that the couple later on took a lease of the ‘*Osteria del Mori*’ in Cremona (3). However, del Gesù must have temporarily worked for his father, whose health became very fragile. Therefore, it is a matter of dispute whether or not the Caspar Hauser was originally labelled by the father, the son – or not at all. / This conclusion perfectly matches



a 1729 cello – where del Gesù had made the top – and the now famous 1731 cello, which was made entirely by del Gesù. Both instruments belong to the last known instruments labelled by Joseph Guarnerius filius d'Andrea. Many other instruments appear to have left the shops unlabelled, while on some labels the third and fourth digits of the year may have been exchanged – voluntarily (e.g. for tax reasons) rather than accidentally, I assume. / After an article about the Caspar Hauser was published in 'The Strad' (4) by the new owner, we were contacted by a German violinist who claimed to have owned the Caspar Hauser for a short while and said that it had had an original label by Joseph Guarnerius filius d'Andrea, dated 1720. He showed up with a 'lost' certificate by the late Etienne Vatelot (1925–2013) from 1994 (5). The notion of the original label is mysterious, as Etienne Vatelot did not mention it in his certificate, which he undoubtedly would have done. From my experience, Etienne Vatelot always took a keen look at labels, and Charles Beare – who later bought a share of the Caspar Hauser and restored it – never would have removed such a small, but rare and important document. / There is a note in the Hill diaries that as early as 1907, the Hills were aware that two violins sold by them as Joseph Filius – the ex Gibson#1, resold by the Hills to Harold Joachim (6), and another they had sold to Dorothy Evans – “were unmistakably made by the great Giuseppe (Guarneri del Gesù)”. However, in their book, (7) both violins were still listed under the late examples of Joseph 'the father', as is the 1731 ex Pendraves cello mentioned above. The ex Pendraves cello was sold by the Hills in 1915–18 to James Messeas, a cellist from the Netherlands then living in Australia and afterwards in the US, where the instrument was judged in the 1960s by Rembert Wurlitzer (1904–1963) and his assistants Simone Sacconi (1895–1973) and the young Charles Beare as being, in fact, the work

of Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù. Wurlitzer's observations were in due course confirmed by the Hills. / Another violin expert-dealer, Emil Herrmann (1888–1968), who worked in the US from the mid-1920s onwards, was among the next experts to make an attempt to establish that many instruments previously assigned to the late period of Joseph Guarneri filius d'Andrea were in fact made by the son. I have a note that Emil Herrmann had considerable difficulties in 1936 when he offered a violin by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù for sale (probably the ex Rappoldi) which at the time still retained its original Nepos label. After the label was exchanged for a facsimile of Giuseppe Guarneri's 'IHS', the authenticity was no longer challenged. / This brief and abridged historical discourse may help readers to understand why such a highly respected expert as Etienne Vatelot, who was born into the old European tradition, in 1994 still assigned the Caspar Hauser to the father's and not to del Gesù's oeuvre. Many violin dealers and auction houses followed this point of view until quite recently. A very similar violin to the Caspar Hauser was shown at the Exhibition in Cremona in 2000 and assigned to Joseph filius in the catalogue. However, it was identified during the Exhibition by Robert Bein (1950–2007) as an early work of Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù. / The architecture of the breast and the sound holes are, in fact, very closely related to the Caspar Hauser and the ex Kartman. In 1985, when a renowned violinist of Swiss residence showed me a famous violin by Joseph Guarneri filius d'Andrea, which he had just bought at an auction in London, I almost immediately recognized it as an early del Gesù. / When I personally became acquainted with the Caspar Hauser, it was clear to me from the beginning that such an obvious Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù could only have remained 'unnamed' because its history had to be hidden. A fate that the Caspar Hauser shares with so many other

instruments – nearly fifty – all categorised in my upcoming index of Giuseppe Guarnerius del Gesù under the pre-1731 type. / The Caspar Hauser was built on a early del Gesù model of his own design with rather large proportions. The back measurements were 35.50 16.45 10.70 20.30 cm with the wasp waist that was typical for the early period, which was later reproduced by the Bergonzis and a few others. Most important is the architecture of the arching of the Caspar Hauser, which shows surprising similarities to several oeuvres of the maker's last period, for instance the c1744 ex Grumiaux, also known as ex Rose-Hennell. I never encountered this in instruments that were made entirely by his father. This architecture, paired with the extra thickness and the extremely sturdy ribs, is most likely the major reason for the instruments' superior tonal qualities, as Charles Beare so felicitously explained in his speech on the 250th anniversary of the death of Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù (1994): „About this very difficult period of the Guarneri work from about 1720 and the years following, one thing only is absolutely certain to me, and that is that the violins are invariably superior in tone to the standard earlier Joseph filius, not necessarily in quality of warmth of tone, because Joseph filius' instruments are wonderful in that respect, but in their capacity to take bow pressure and translate it into clear, powerful sound required by the solo performer.“ All of this is perfectly demonstrated in this outstanding recording by violinist Oleg Kaskiv.

Michael A. Baumgartner

ICONO- & BIBLIOGRAPHY

(1) Certificate of authenticity, London, February 9th 2007 (CB/5344) (2) Catarina/Catharina Roda/Rota. Note: Early in my career I saw a rare viola – somewhat similar to the earlier Grancino type, with painted flames in the same manner as Joseph Guaragnini produced later – bearing an original label by a Carlo Rota in Terretorio di Lecco dated in the 1720s. As far as my knowledge goes, no one ever researched this obscure maker, whose existence offers a rare track, although I do not have the least idea whether or not he was related to del Gesù's wife. (3) Peter Biddulph (editor), Carlo Chiesa, John Dilworth, Roger Graham Hargrave, Stewart Pollens, Duane Rosengard and Eric Wen: "Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù", 2 Volumes, London 1998 (4) The StradMagazine May 2011; pages 56–57 (5) Certificat d'authenticité, by Etienne Vatelot, luthier-expert, dated Paris April 13th 1994 (6) Harold H. Joachim (1868–1938), nephew and son-in-law of the eminent violinist-teacher Joseph Joachim (1831–1907). Harold Joachim sold the Guarnerius when he inherited his uncle's Stradivari via W.E. Hammig (1838–1925) in Berlin, to the violinist Sigmund Beel (1863–c1953). (7) William Henry Hill, Arthur F. Hill & Alfred Ebsworth Hill: "The Violin Makers of the Guarneri family 1626–1762", London 1931, various reprints



THE SOLOIST: OLEG KASKIV

Oleg Kaskiv was born into a family of musicians in 1978, in the small Ukrainian village of Kremenezh. He started playing the violin at the age of seven under the guidance of his violinist parents, and later entered the M. Lysenko National Academy of Music in Lviv. / In 1996, he won a scholarship to study in Switzerland at the famous International Menuhin Music Academy (IMMA), which was founded by Lord Yehudi Menuhin in 1977. At the academy, Oleg's great mentor was Professor Alberto Lysy (who himself was educated directly by Lord Yehudi Menuhin – his only student), who passed to him the art of playing the great Romantic violin. / Today, Oleg Kaskiv is a soloist and lead violin professor at the IMMA. He has also been teaching at the Conservatoire de Genève since 2007. / As a soloist, Oleg Kaskiv performs regularly with a great deal of success in his native country along with the National Symphony of Ukraine, the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Lviv Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, as well as worldwide with the Camerata Lysy, Camerata de Lausanne, Symphonisches Orchester Zürich, Orchestre National de Belgique, Orchestre Symphonique de Montreal, and Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden. / He is a laureate of many prestigious violin competitions: the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition (Belgium), the International Oistrakh Competition (Ukraine), the International Kotorovych Violin Competition (Ukraine), the International Spohr Competition (Germany), the International Montreal Competition (Canada), the International Premio Lipizer (Italy), the International Niredegazi Violin Competition (Japan), the International Dvarionas Violin Competition (Lithuania), and the International Molinari Competition (Switzerland).



EUGÈNE YSAÏE (1858–1931)

SIX SONATAS FOR VIOLIN SOLO OP. 27 (1923–1924)

SONATA NO. 1 IN G MINOR “TO JOSEPH SZIGETI”

- 1 Grave (Lento assai) 2 Fugato (Molto moderato)
3 Allegretto poco scherzoso (Amabile)
4 Finale con brio (Allegro fermo)

SONATA NO. 2 IN A MINOR “TO JACQUES THIBAUD”

- 5 Obsession: Prelude 6 Malinconia
7 Danse des Ombres : Sarabande 8 Les Furies

SONATA NO. 3 IN D MINOR “TO GEORGES ENESCO”

- 9 Ballade

SONATA NO. 4 IN E MINOR “TO FRITZ KREISLER”

- 10 Allemande 11 Sarabande 12 Finale

SONATA NO. 5 IN G MAJOR “TO MATHIEU CRICKBOOM”

- 13 L'Aurore 14 Danse Rustique

SONATA NO. 6 IN E MAJOR “TO MANUEL QUIROGA”

- 15 Allegro giusto non troppo vivo

THE MUSIC: THE VIOLIN SOLO SONATAS BY EUGÈNE YSAÏE

The cycle of Sonatas op. 27 for violin solo by Eugène Ysaÿe refers to the last period of his work as a composer. His personal interest in the genre of Sonatas for violin solo appeared under the influence of genius J. S. Bach's Sonatas and Partitas. This is confirmed by a quantity of Sonatas and a coincidence of tonalities in the first Sonatas (in G minor) and in the last of them (in E major), as well as forms that were used such as Allemande and Sarabande. Moreover, the prelude from Sonata No. 2 begins with a two-bar quotation from the prelude to the last Partita by J. S. Bach. However, in spite of all of this, Eugène Ysaÿe displays a great deal of respect to the creation of the J. S. Bach works, though an inheritance is out of the question. The Sonatas by Ysaÿe are characterised by exceptional originality and peculiarity. This genre acquires substantial changes and is interpreted very freely by Ysaÿe. This is confirmed by the four-part Sonatas No. 1 and No. 2, the three-part Sonata No. 4, as well as the two-part Sonata No. 5 and one-part Sonatas No. 3 and No. 6. Naturally, these Sonatas differ not only in their form, but also in their contents and mood.

Sonata No. 1 in G minor is dedicated to the Hungarian violinist, Jozsef Szigeti

The first part, Grave, is written by Eugène Ysaÿe as part of a process of direct improvisation. The second part, Fugato, is one of the most interesting due to its polyphonic plan. A simple, expressive theme is very skilfully pursued in four voices. After the scherzos Allegretto comes the dancing Finale which is based on Hungarian folk themes.

Sonata No. 2 in a-moll is dedicated to the French violinist, Jacques Thibaud, a very close friend of Eugène Ysaÿe

The themes for the first part, Prelude, were taken from J. S. Bach's Prelude in E major. However, musical material by Ysaÿe presents a great desire to create individual music, independently of J. S. Bach. On the second part, Malinconia (Song of Sorrow), Ysaÿe uses the tunes from Dies irae, and due to this, a gloomy mood is acquired by this part. The third part, Danse des ombres, consists of six rhythmically different variations. In a masterly fashion, the fourth part, Les Furies, is built on a chord technique.

Sonata No. 3 in D minor is dedicated to the Romanian violinist, Georges Enesco

It has the subtitle of Ballad. This sonata is extraordinarily poetic and expressive. It begins with the restrain recitative which comes to a brilliant culmination. The main theme of the section, Allegro in tempo giusto, is bright, emotional, and decorated with a sharp rhythmic figure. The middle of the sonata is full of grace and a fine, masterly technique. This work ends with a gradual crescendo that is built on a motif of the main theme.

Sonata No. 4 in E minor is dedicated to the Austrian violinist, Fritz Kreisler

The first part, Allemande, begins with a slow improvisation introduction. Later, a monumental, energetic episode emerges which determines the basic character of the part. The second part, Sarabande, is written in a three-voiced exposition of the ostinato theme, pizzicato, traces of which are met in a Finale for the sonata. In the Finale, themes from previous parts echo through the tempo, Presto.

Sonata No. 5 in G major is dedicated to the Belgian violinist, Mathieu Crickboom

This two-part sonata presents the programmes and descriptive tendencies. Its musical language is colourful and close to the Impressionistic style. The first part, L'Aurore, represents a pre-morning quiet and the gradual awakening of nature. The dynamic growth from ppp to fff is very interesting. The second part, Danse Rustique, is a three-part piece, in which a liquid middle episode, Moderato cantabile, contrasts with dancing and rhythmically underlined last sections.

Sonata No. 6 in E major is dedicated to the Spanish violinist, Manuel Quiroga

This one-part work, bright and temperamental, is connected with Spanish themes. It is considered to be the most difficult to be performed. Due to the characteristic rhythm of Habanera music, the Allegretto poco scerzando acquires an especially brightly expressed national colouring.

For the successful performance of the Sonatas for violin solo by Eugène Ysaÿe, a violinist must possess all types of the masterly technique, a figurative artistic vision, polyphonic comprehension, and vocal colours. For this reason, the Sonatas by Eugène Ysaÿe are included in the programme for the highly prestigious Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium. / **Bohdan Kaskiv, Head Professor of Violin, Mykola Lysenko L'viv National Music Academy**

THE RECORDING: A NEW 'OLD' APPROACH

This recording was realised with the claim of possessing the ultimate in sound quality. In order to achieve this goal, the Basel Volkshaus Studio was chosen for its outstanding acoustics, which can be variably adjusted and optimised for different needs. A good deal of time was spent in finding the ideal positions for violinist and microphones, as well as for the right microphones themselves. This was how recordings were made in the 1950s, which resulted in production levels that are still unmatched. / For the present production I have tried out all the microphones in my collection, which also include all of the important historic Neumann microphones. Indeed, of the main microphones that were placed in a spaced pair configuration (A-B technique), the Neumann M49, a large-diaphragm, tube-based condenser microphone from 1951, was the most convincing. With this the violin sound displayed a natural 'big' dimension as well as a level of intimacy. In contrast, the results from the typical modern small diaphragm condenser microphone sounded 'sharp, small, and non-musical'. In order to capture the space optimally, two DPA 4006TLs and two Neumann KM 253 tube microphones were placed at various positions in the room. As pre-amplifier and AD converter, the Horus, developed by merging, was the most convincing one. Its neutrality conserved the performance of the violin and microphones at its best. / Also, in the signal balancing process we went our own way. This process was done both digitally on the computer, as is commonly done today, and also in analogue format on a Studer 963 mixing board. When comparing both mixes in a blind fashion, the analogue version was clearly better in all respects. This recording was then transferred to a Studer C37 tube tape machine and compared again. Interestingly, the recording from this tape turned out to be livelier and sounded the best of all. This master tape was then transferred back to the computer by high-quality AD converters and the CDs were



manufactured directly from there. / Thanks to all of this, this CD production work can be definitively seen as an experiment in sound research. These days, recordings are more and more often done by sub-optimal means and the post-processing is done in home studios. Trends are clearly heading towards a sub-optimal mainstream recording and away from a high-quality process. With this recording we tried to counteract this trend and to produce a CD at its best in order to introduce more empathy in which the listener is seized not only by the music, but also by the art of the recording. / **Daniel Dettwiler**

Recording dates: 25–27 June 2013; 16–17 December 2013; 14–15 July 2014 / **Recording location:** Volkshaus Studio, Basel / **Sound director and balance engineer:** Daniel Dettwiler / **Recording producer:** Joël Cormier / **Editing and assistant engineering:** Benjamin Gut / **Mixing, mastering and editing:** Idee und Klang Studio, Basel / **Studio manager:** David Klein, Basel / **Violin expert and care:** Michael Baumgartner, Basel / **Photos:** Jürg Isler, Basel; Diego Saldiva Photography, Bern; Martin Spiess, Liestal / **Leaflet design:** Sprenger Grafik Design, Basel / **Producer:** Walter Fischli, Allschwil